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IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

MARCH 18, 1824.

Mr. BENTON, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, communicated the following documents:

SENATE CHAMBER, February 11, 1824.

SIR: I am instructed, by the Committee on Indian Affairs, to inquire:

1. What would be the probable expense of moving a military post, of competent strength, to some point between the mouth of the Yellow Stone river and the Falls of Missouri?

2. What would be the probable amount of appropriation necessary to hold treaties, for the purpose of establishing relations of trade and friendship with the Indian tribes beyond the Mississippi?

3. Whether additional agencies are necessary among those tribes; and, if so, how many?

The committee would, likewise, wish to know the plan which the government would prefer for maintaining peace with the Indians, and preserving the fur trade, within the United States, to American citizens.

Very respectfully, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS H. BENTON,

Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Hon. Mr. CALHOUN,

Secretary of War.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR, Feb. 23, 1824.

SIR: I have received your letter of the 11th instant, written by direction of the Committee on Indian Affairs, inquiring,

" 1. What would be the probable expense of moving a military force, of competent strength, to some point between the mouth of the Yellow Stone river and the Falls of Missouri?

" 2. What would be the probable amount of appropriation necessary to hold treaties for the purpose of establishing relations of trade and of friendship with the Indian tribes beyond the Mississippi?

“ 3. Whether additional agencies are necessary among these tribes; and, if so, how many?”

Also, requesting to be informed of “ the plan which the Government preferred, for maintaining peace with these Indians, and preserving the fur trade, within the United States, to American citizens.”

In answer to the 1st inquiry, I transmit, herewith, a report of the Quartermaster General.

The 2d inquiry it is difficult to answer, with any precision; but, as treaties with the Indians, for the purpose, merely, of establishing relations of trade and friendship, are usually attended with but little expense it is presumed that an appropriation of \$10,000 would be sufficient for holding such treaties with the Indians referred to.

For the information required by the 3d inquiry, I would respectfully refer the committee to a letter of this Department, of the 12th ultimo, to Gen. Cocke, Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives, in answer to a similar inquiry, which has been recently printed, by order of the House, and is numbered 56. It is proper to observe, however, that, if Congress should deem it expedient to extend our military posts on the Missouri, other agencies, in addition to the two referred to in that letter, will be necessary; and, in that event, I would respectfully propose that authority be given to employ not exceeding two additional sub-agents, with an annual compensation of \$800, and to be under the control of the Indian agent now on the Missouri. It is believed that suitable characters can be procured, for the salary mentioned. This proposition is made, under the conviction that the views of the Government would be better promoted by the employment of two active sub-agents, than they could possibly be by one principal agent, and with less additional expense; the compensation of the present agent at Council Bluffs being \$1800, which, it is presumed, would be that of any other that might be authorized higher up the Missouri.

In reply to the 4th, and last, inquiry, relative to “ the plan which the Government preferred for maintaining peace with these Indians, and preserving the fur trade, within the United States, to American citizens,” I have to state, that the opinion of the Government, on this subject, remains unchanged. The exclusion of foreign traders from our territory is deemed to be indispensable to the security of our traders, and the establishing and maintaining relations of amity and peace with the numerous tribes of Indians on the Mississippi and Missouri; and it is believed, that the extension of our posts, as formerly proposed, or occasional movements of our troops up the Missouri, as far as the Mandan Villages, or the mouth of the Yellow Stone, present the only effectual mode of attaining these desirable objects. For more particular information of the views of the Department on this subject, and in relation to the trade with the Indians, the committee is respectfully referred to my letter of the 29th December, 1819, to the Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs of the House of Representatives, and report on the Indian trade, made to the House of Representatives, the 5th December, 1818; the

first of which may be found among the State papers, 1st Session, 16th Congress, vol. 10, (labelled "Reports of Committees,") No. 24; and the latter in Vol. 1, No. 25, State Papers, 2d Session, 15th Congress.

I have the honor to be,

Your most obedient servant,

J. C. CALHOUN.

Hon. THO'S H. BENTON,

*Chairman Committee on Indian Affairs,
Senate United States.*

QUARTER MASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,

Washington City, February 18, 1824.

SIR: In reply to the inquiry of the Chairman of the Committee of Indian Affairs, requesting to know "what would be the probable expense of moving a military force, of competent strength, to some point between the mouth of Yellow Stone river, and the Falls of Missouri?" I have the honor to state, that the expense will depend upon the number of the troops to be moved, and the distance they shall be required to move. Believing that the post at the Council Bluffs was contemplated as the point of departure, I shall consider it so, and present an estimate of the amount necessary to remove from thence, to the point intended to be occupied, a force of four companies, which I should consider amply sufficient to sustain itself against all the Indians on the Missouri, unless they be aided by some European power.

The necessary expense of the movement will consist of an outfit of boats to transport the detachment to its destination; the hire of about fifty boatmen to assist in navigating the boats; and the tools necessary to enable the detachment to construct barracks, store houses, defences, &c.

For four companies, eight boats would be sufficient; they might be built by the troops, at about \$400 each, or be purchased at \$700 each.

Say eight boats, at \$700	-	-	-	-	\$ 5,600
Fifty boatmen, for 120 days, at \$ 1 each per day	-	-	-	-	6,000
Amount for tools	-	-	-	-	1,500

Total, \$ 13,100

The whole expense of moving the detachment, and making its establishment, would not exceed thirteen thousand one hundred dollars; and if boatmen should not be employed. (and it is probable they might be dispensed with) the expense would not exceed seven thousand one hundred dollars. It is believed that the movement directed by Col. Leavenworth, cost the public less than four thousand dollars;

and, without any additional expense, the Colonel could have occupied any position below the Falls of Missouri.

The estimate which I now submit, is made for the transportation of provisions and stores sufficient for the detachment for twelve months.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

TH. S. JESUP,

Quartermaster General.

The Hon. J. C. CALHOUN,

Secretary of War, Washington City.

WASHINGTON CITY, February 10th, 1824.

SIR: I have the honor to enclose to you the answers to the questions put to me by the Committee of the Senate on Indian Affairs; a part of these answers are made from my own knowledge and observations, and a part from the recollection of conversations with persons conversant with Indian affairs on the Missouri, and on whose opinions and judgment I have great reliance.

Respectfully, yours,

R. GRAHAM, *U. S. Indian Agent.*

Hon. THOS. H. BENTON,

Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Question 1st. Have you had opportunities of becoming acquainted personally, or by information to be relied upon, with the Indian tribes beyond the Mississippi?

Answer. I became acquainted with several tribes residing on the west side of the Mississippi, personally, and with the character of other tribes, residing high up the Missouri, by information from persons on whom I could rely.

Question 2d. Have you known or heard of any hostilities between the citizens of the United States, and the Black Feet Indians? If so, state the instances.

Answer. I have. About the years 1808 or 10, a company was formed in St. Louis, for the purpose of trading with, and trapping among, the Indians residing on the waters of the Missouri river. A party from this company was sent to the Mountains to trap; they built their post I believe, on the Yellow Stone, and commenced their trapping in that country over which the Black Feet Indians range. A party of these Indians discovered one of the trapping parties, way laid and killed some of them; reinforcements were obtained from the post, or some of the trappers near at hand; they pursued, overtook,

and had a battle with the Indians, in which several Indians were killed, and I believe one or two white men. The hostility of these Indians presented such obstacles to the party, that, after several losses, by robbery of their traps, &c. they were compelled to retire from the country.

Question 3d. Are the Black Feet a wandering or stationary tribe?

Answer. They are a wandering tribe, and have no fixed habitation; raising no corn and depending entirely upon the chase.

Question 4th. Over what district of country do they range?

Answer. Over that country which lies between the Yellow Stone river, the Rocky Mountains, and as far north as the Saska-tche-wine river, seldom or ever wandering on the Missouri below the mouth of the Yellow Stone river, but sometimes crossing that river, and extending their war or hunting parties as far as the Arkansas. The Aripohoes who inhabit the country south of the Yellow Stone, and who are also erratic, and depend entirely upon the chase, are a band of the tribe of Black Feet Indians; making the range of these Indians along the base of the Rocky Mountains from the Rio del Norte to the Saska-tche-wine.

Question 5th. Do you know, or have you heard of any citizens of the United States hunting or trapping in this district? If so, state the particulars.

Answer. The answer to the 2d query furnishes the first instance that I have heard of. Sometime after this, a party hunting south of the Yellow Stone were taken prisoners by the Spaniards, and carried into Santa Fe. The party of Ashley and Henry, of recent date, and some of the Missouri Fur Company, furnish the only instances of parties hunting or trapping within that district of country. The traders from Missouri to Santa Fe, occasionally trap on the waters of the Arkansas and head waters of the Rio del Norte; these traders meet with the Aripohoes, but, as yet, I have not heard of any mischief done by them, though I hear of their threats.

Question 6th. With whom do the Black Feet trade?

Answer. Formerly, I believe, through the Assiniboin, with the British establishments on Moose River; at present, with that establishment, and others of the Hudson Bay Company, extending on as far as the waters of the Columbia River.

Question 7th. Have you known or heard of any hostilities between the Arikaras Indians and citizens of the United States? If so, state the circumstances of each case.

Answer. The first instance was in the case of the Mandan Chief, who was returning home, under the protection of the United States; for the particulars of which, I refer to the official reports.

Within the last twelve months, after inviting, as I understood, the Missouri Fur Company to send traders among them with such articles as they wanted, they treacherously attacked the company's post, in which attack the Indians lost two men; they also attacked Gen. Ashley, with his party of trappers, on their way to the mountains in June last, and killed and wounded 26 men; for the particulars I refer to the official report.

Question 8th.—Are the Arikaras a stationary or wandering tribe?

Answer.—Stationary. They raise abundance of corn, pumpkins, peas, and beans—live in two villages, on the banks of the Missouri, about 150 miles below the Mandans, and which they had fortified—they seldom, or ever, extend their hunting excursions beyond 40 or 50 miles from their village. Buffaloes, on which they principally depend, are found, in immense herds, within that distance.

Question 9th.—Do you know, or have you heard, that any American citizens have hunted or trapped on the grounds belonging to the Arikaras? Do you know of a letter, purporting to be written by an Indian agent at St. Louis, and published in the Atlantic papers, ascribing their hostility to this cause?

Answer.—Never. I have always understood that beaver and otter are found, but in small quantities, in this country. American citizens, who go into the Indian country for the purpose of trapping, always go where they believe the most beaver is to be taken—distance and difficulties present no obstacles to them. In passing through the Arickaras country, they kill of the buffaloe a sufficiency for their daily subsistence. I know nothing of the letter written by an Indian agent at St. Louis, ascribing *their hostility* to the trapping on the Arickaras ground; nor do I believe such a letter could be written by an *Indian agent*.

Question 10.—Do you know of any cause which led to the attack upon Gen. Ashley's party?

Answer.—I have understood the cause which led to Gen. Ashley's attack, was a demand made on him for compensation for the two Arickaras killed by the Missouri Fur Company, which was refused by Gen. Ashley. After failing in their various efforts to induce him to pay for the Indians which were killed by the Missouri Fur Company, they consented to open a trade for some of their horses, which Gen. Ashley was much in want of—the trade progressed and finished satisfactory to both parties. In the course of the evening, Gen. Ashley was notified, by a chief, of the intention of the villages to attack him that night, or very early the next morning, and advised him to take his horses on the opposite bank of the river. Circumstances, that then looked suspicious, induced Gen. Ashley to believe it was rather the intention of this chief to steal the horses, by his urging him to remove them across the river, as small parties of Indians were occasionally seen on the opposite side. He, however, strengthened his guard, and paid no farther attention to the chief, who continued urging him to move to the opposite side. Early in the morning, the party were alarmed by the firing which they heard, and soon discovered that their guard had not only been attacked, but nearly all killed and wounded.

Question 11.—Have you any reason to believe that the Hudson Bay Company excited the Arickaras to that attack?

Answer.—I have no reason to believe they did.

Question 12.—Do you know, or have you heard, of any hostilities between the Assiniboins and citizens of the United States?

Answer.—I have not heard of any.

Question 13.—Are the Assiniboina stationary or wandering?

Answer.—I know very little of the habits of those Indians. I know of no traders other than British, who go among them. They are numerous, and are the nearest Indians to the Hudson Bay establishments on Red River and its waters.

Question 14.—Where is the richest fur region beyond the Mississippi?

Answer.—I have always understood the northern branches of the Missouri, above the junction of the Yellow Stone, contained more beaver than any known country.

Question 15.—Can the fur trade of this region be secured to the citizens of the United States, without the aid of a military post at, or beyond the Mandan village?

Answer.—I think it cannot. If the hand of Government was extended to the protection of the fur trade of this country, it would be a source of immense wealth to the nation; but, without the protection of a military post above the Mandans, our traders will be compelled to withdraw themselves, and the whole of that rich fur region will be occupied by those from the Hudson Bay Company, and our traders cut off from any participation of it, above the Mandans—below this point, the fur trade will be of no value or profit in a few years.

Question 16.—Can corn, for the supply of a post, be raised or purchased?

Answer.—Corn can be raised at the most northern points of the Missouri. The Mandans and Arickaras raise large supplies; but I would suppose a dependence upon an Indian supply would be precarious.

Question 17.—Is there a trade carried on between Missouri and New Mexico? And what articles are carried out and brought back in return?

Answer.—There is a small trade at present, the continuance of which will very much depend upon the capacity of the Spaniards at Santa Fe to support it. They are miserably poor, and give, in exchange, (for British and domestic goods, which our traders take to them,) jacks and mules, which they get from St. Antoine, and some little silver and furs caught by the Indians in that quarter. Combined with this trade is the trapping carried on by our citizens, who, for that purpose, spend some time on the waters of Rio del Norte and Arkansas. Though I have generally been informed, by the parties returning from that trade, that it was not worth carrying on, yet they continue the trade. If these parties, trading to Santa Fe, were less liable to interruption in their trade by the depredations of the different Indian tribes through whom they are compelled to pass, I believe the trade would be carried on to a greater extent, and the enterprise of our hardy citizens would push it to the more wealthy city of Mexico.

Question 18.—Is it subject to be interrupted by Indians on the waters of the Arkansas?

Answer.—It is. The Camanches, Aripohoes, Pawnees, and Osages, all cross the Santa Fe trail in their hunting or war parties, con-

sequently, are liable to fall in with parties going to, or coming from, Santa Fe, and are very apt to steal their horses. A part of their route runs through the Osage country. One of the articles of a treaty with that nation provides that no white man shall pass through their country without their permission. They complain of the violation of this article of the treaty. The chiefs say it is impossible for them to keep their young men from stealing from those parties. The assent of the different Indian tribes, through whose country our traders pass, would, I think, facilitate the trade.

Question 19.—Would a military post, some distance higher up the Arkansas than Fort Smith, contribute to protect the citizens engaged in this trade?

Answer.—I am of opinion that a post, established at or near the mouth of the Little Arkansas, would greatly contribute to the protection of the trade to Santa Fe. Any position below that point would be so far from the track travelled, that but little protection could be extended to those who carried on the trade.

Question 20.—What is the temper of the tribes towards the citizens of the United States, which have an intercourse with the British?

Answer.—Generally unfriendly. I have always found those Indians, within our territories, who visit British posts, more unfriendly to us, and more difficult to control.

Question 21.—What is the temper of the tribes towards the citizens of the United States, which have no intercourse with the British traders?

Answer.—With those tribes, within my own knowledge, very friendly, and generally so, so far as I have understood of others.

Question 22.—How near do the British trading establishments approach the territories of the United States?

Answer.—Those on Red River border immediately on our territories, and some of these, I believe, within it. There are some situated within 150 miles of the Great North Bend of Missouri.

Question 23. Is it to the benefit, or injury, of the fur traders, to have hostilities with the Indians?

Answer. By no means to the benefit, but to the great injury of the traders. The very existence of the trade depends upon peace with the different Indians, both with the white people, and among themselves.

Question 24. Has the abolition of the factory system been the cause of any Indian hostilities beyond the Mississippi?

Answer. In no one instance, within my knowledge.

Question 25. What is your opinion of the good or bad effects of hunting and trapping on Indian lands, by American citizens?

Answer. I am decidedly of opinion, that the hunting and trapping on Indian lands, by American citizens, produce the most unhappy effects upon the mind of the Indians. They look upon their game as we do upon our domestic animals, and hold them in the same estimation. It is their means of support: they have nothing else to depend upon for subsistence. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose,

that they will not only steal from, but murder those who are depriving them of their only means of subsistence. One of the means of putting a stop to this, would be, the locating of the traders at suitable positions, within the Indian countries; and not permit them to attend the Indians on their hunting parties, as they at present do, many of them carrying with them their traps. They should be placed at such places as the agent might designate; and the Indian would then know that every white man found on his lands, at any other place than the trading establishment, was a trespasser, and might be taken up and brought to the agent.

Mr. Pilcher's Answers to Questions, put to him by the Committee of the Senate on Indian Affairs.

Question 1st. Have you had an opportunity of becoming acquainted personally, or by information to be relied upon, with the Indian tribes beyond the Mississippi?

Answer. Having been engaged in the Indian trade for the last four years, on the Missouri river, and its tributary waters, I have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted personally, and by information to be relied upon, with most of the Indian tribes in all that region beyond the state of Missouri as far as the Rocky Mountains. The tribes personally known to me, and with most of whom an extensive trade has been carried on, as well by the Missouri fur company, (to which I belong) as other companies of St. Louis, are the following. 1. The Kansas, whose permanent residence is on the Kansas river; 2. The Ottos; and 3. Missouries, two small tribes, who have villages on the river Platte, a short distance from the Council Bluffs; 4. The Panis, a very numerous tribe, whose villages are also on the river Platte, about 150 miles from the Council Bluffs; 5th. The Mahas, residing a little west of the Council Bluffs, on the Elk Horn, a branch of the river Platte, say from 4 to 500 men; 6. The Puncas, a small, and, at present, a wandering tribe, who generally range through the country, on the *L'eau qui cours*, as far west as the mountains in which that river takes its rise; 7. And, with the different bands of Sioux Indians, neither of which have any fixed residence, but wander over a vast section of country, on the right and left banks of the Missouri river. On the right from the Big Sioux river, to the sources of *Jacques river*, the St. Peters, and Red River. And on the opposite side, they range through all the country watered by the *L'eau qui cours*, White River, and the river Chayenne, as far as the Black Mountains, in which some of those streams rise, and frequently as far north as the heads of the Little Missouri, above the Mandans.

At or near the *Big Bend* of Missouri, a trade is carried on with those several tribes, which are as follow: 8. The Yanktons; 9. Teton; 10. Siouones; 11. Ogallallas; 12. Honk pa pas, and 13. Yanktonas; amounting in all, I should judge from their own accounts, and my own observation, to 10 or 12,000 souls, and perhaps more. A

small band of the Chyenne Indians, another wandering tribe, sometimes visit those establishments for the purpose of trading.

I have also a personal knowledge of the 14. Riccaras; 15. Mandans; and 16. Minnetarees, (sometimes called Gros Ventres.) These tribes reside permanently on the banks of the Missouri. The Riccaras are from 450 to 600 warriors strong; the Mandans and Minnetarees, about 250 each, from their own accounts; and reside near the same point in different villages. These are the only three tribes of Indians above the Council Bluffs, east of the Rocky Mountains, who have any fixed residence, or depend on any thing but the chase for subsistence.

The foregoing tribes are the only Indians, of whom I have any personal knowledge. There are several wandering tribes south of the Yellowstone river, known only by the information of persons on whom I can rely, who have been sent into that country with a view of ascertaining the prospect of opening a trade with those tribes, and for the purpose of *trapping beaver*. 17. The Chayennes, 18. Rap-pa-hos, (supposed to be a band of the Black Feet.) 19. Kay-a-was; and 20. Crows, are separate tribes, who range through the country south of the Yellowstone river, from its confluence with the Missouri, through the Rocky Mountains, on the waters of the river Platte and Arkansas, and as far as the Spanish settlements. I have no accurate information respecting the numbers of the three former tribes. The Crows, by their own accounts, have about 1,500 men; but, from the information of persons who have spent several winters amongst them, and taken some pains to ascertain their actual strength, I should judge they fall short of that number. 21. The Black Foot, numerous and powerful; and 22. The Assinnaboin, also numerous.

Question. 2d. Have you heard of any hostilities between the Black Foot Indians and citizens of the United States?

Answer. The Blackfoot Indians have uniformly manifested a hostile disposition to all American citizens who have visited their country from the time of its discovery, by Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, up to the present day. It will be recollected, that Captain Lewis, when returning from the Columbia, met with a party of those Indians, on Maria's River, or with a party called Minnetarees, of *Fort de Prairie*, who were the associates of the Blackfoot Indians, and, probably, a band of that nation. This party, after the most liberal and friendly treatment on the part of Captain Lewis, attempted to rob him and his men, which produced a skirmish, and some two or three of the Indians were killed. Between the years 1808 and 1810, a company was formed in St. Louis, by a number of respectable citizens, as well for the purpose of *hunting and trapping beaver*, as to open a friendly intercourse, and trade, with those and other Indians in that country. Several members of this company headed an expedition, and penetrated as far as the three forks of the Missouri. I believe nothing was omitted which it was thought would tend to bring about a friendly interview with those Indians; as a friendly understanding with them could alone insure a successful result to the adventure. This object

could not be accomplished: the Indians attacked them at all points; and, in a short time, they were compelled to abandon the country, with the loss of many men and some property. Since that time, no American citizens have visited the country until the spring of 1823. In the summer of 1822, our company fitted out an expedition under the direction of Messrs. Immell and Jones, the object of which was to extend our business to the sources of the Missouri, as well for the purpose of *trapping beaver*, as to ascertain the prospect of introducing our trade among the Blackfoot Indians, and any other tribes in that country. This party wintered on the Yellow Stone River, near the mouth of the *Big Horn*, at Fort Benton; a post established in the winter of 1821, for the trade of the Crow Indians, and as a *depot* for a party of trappers. In the spring of 1823, the party, (then consisting of thirty men,) left this post, and penetrated as far as the three forks of Missouri. I had instructed the heads of this party to use every effort to obtain a friendly interview with the Blackfoot Indians, and to incur any reasonable expense for the accomplishment of that object; and to impress them with the friendly disposition of American citizens towards them, and with the true object of visiting the country. The party continued in the country without meeting with any Blackfoot Indians, until about the middle of May, having extended their operations to the sources of Jefferson's Fork, when they concluded to return to the Yellow Stone. While descending the Jefferson River, on their return, they met, for the first time, with a party of Blackfoot Indians, consisting of thirty-eight men. Aware of the hostile spirit formerly manifested by them, they were not permitted to approach without some precaution on the part of the whites; finally, one of the Indians exhibited a letter, when they were immediately invited to approach. The bearer presented the letter to Mr. Immell, which was not directed to any person, but was superscribed, in the English language, "*God save the King.*" The paper contained a recommendation to the Indian, stating that he was one of the principal chiefs of his nation, well disposed towards whites, and had a large quantity of furs, &c. The letter was not signed; it was written on the leaf of an account book, which seemed to have been headed, before it was taken from the book, "*Mountain Post, 1823.*" It was dated, at the bottom, "*1820.*" The Indians were invited to remain with the party for the night, and did so, making many professions of friendship, and appeared much gratified at the propositions to establish trading-houses in the country; and pointed out the mouth of Maria's river, 70 or 80 miles below the falls of Missouri, as the most desirable spot; stating that they had understood such to be the objects of the company, &c. This was the fact, but how they got the information I am unable to divine. They were, also, in possession of all the information relative to an establishment at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, made the preceding Fall, by Messrs. Ashley and Henry; their views respecting trapping, hunting, &c. In the morning, the Indians received a number of articles as presents, and left their party, apparently well satisfied.

The suspicious appearances of the abovementioned letter, a good knowledge of the Indian character, and particularly of the treache-

rous disposition of that nation, induced the heads of the party to move with all possible expedition, and use every precaution. They succeeded in reaching the Yellow Stone River, and had descended it, for some distance, below the mountains, and began to consider themselves secure, having met with several hunting parties of Crow Indians, who were known to them, and well disposed. But the Black Feet had assembled, to the number of three or four hundred warriors, intercepted the party, and selected a favourable position, where they attacked and defeated them. The result was, the loss of Messrs. Immell & Jones, and five other men, and the entire loss of all the property in their possession, amounting to 15 or 16,000 dollars. The chief who bore the letter beforementioned, was recognized amongst the party as one of the leaders. About the time those circumstances occurred, a party of Black Foot Indians attacked a party of trappers headed by Major Henry at some point between the Missouri and Yellowstone, killed four or five of his men, and drove them from the country.

Question 3d. Are the Black Foot Indians wandering or stationary?

Answer. The Black Foot Indians are a wandering tribe.

Question 4th. Over what section of country do they range?

Answer. They range through the country north of the Missouri, from the Saskachiwene to Maria's river, over all the country watered by that river; through the Rocky Mountains, on the different tributaries of the Missouri, to the heads of Gallatin's Fork, and to the sources of the Yellowstone, Platte, and Arkansas rivers; and from all the information I have been able to collect, the mouth of Maria's river is the most central point of the country through which they wander. But it is difficult to point out the exact limits of any of those wandering tribes; because they observe none themselves. Both the Crow Indians and Black Feet (particularly the latter) frequently range west of the mountains, particularly on war excursions against the Shoshones, Snakes, Flatheads, and other tribes on the Columbia river.

Question 5th. Do you know, or have you heard of any citizens of the United States having hunted or trapped in this district? If so, state the particulars.

Answer. The committee will find an answer to this interrogatory in my reply to those preceding it.

Question 6th. With whom do the Black Foot Indians trade?

Answer. There is no doubt but the Black Foot Indians trade with the Hudson's Bay Company. They are well supplied with arms, ammunition, traps, blankets, stroudings, chiefs' coats, hats, and all other articles of merchandise, used by the different tribes of Indians, who trade in British manufactured goods; and at all the old Indian encampments about the Three Forks of the Missouri are to be found small rum kegs, and the heads of kegs, branded with the marks of the Hudson's Bay and North West Company. The Indians themselves say they procure those articles from the *British living to the north*. It is well known, that they derive nothing of the kind from the Spanish settlements, and that there never has been any trade between them

and American citizens; it is known that those Indians were in the habit of trading with those companies many years ago, and all the circumstances combined, can leave no doubt but that intercourse is continued.

Question 7th. Have you known or heard of any hostilities between the Riccara Indians, and citizens of the United States? If so, state the circumstances of each case.

Answer.—In relation to the hostile disposition of the Ricara Indians towards American citizens, I would observe, that a minute detail of each case would occupy more time than can be spared to the detail. I will therefore only state some of the most prominent cases which have come to my knowledge. It is known to some of the committee, that the Ricara nation attacked and defeated Lieuts. Chouteau and Pryor, about the year 1808, while ascending the Missouri river, under the American flag, with one of the Mandan Chiefs and his family, who accompanied Messrs. Lewis and Clark to the United States, on their return from the Columbia. I know that the Ricaras killed a man about the year 1816 or 1817, a little above the Big Bend of the Missouri river, in the Sioux country, who was in the employment of some one of the *fur traders* of St. Louis. I know that a war party of Ricaras, amounting to 80 or 90 men, came down to that country (Sioux country) in the month of April, 1820, and robbed two trading houses established by the Missouri Fur Company for the trade of the Sioux Indians, one above, and the other a little below, the *Big Bend* of Missouri, beat and abused the men in charge of the houses, and that the same party continued down the Missouri still further, to the trading houses of another company, and robbed them of a considerable amount of merchandise—from the owners' account, not less than 16 or \$1700.

In September, 1822, I visited the Ricara villages myself, for the first time. I was going to the Mandans and Minnetarees, for the purpose of establishing trading houses for these Indians. I was deceived in the Ricaras in different ways. From their former disposition, I had anticipated difficulties with them; but they received me well, and their conduct was so different from what I had expected, that I made them large presents, and received, in return, many professions of friendship, and promises to commit no further depredations. I left, by their own request, a clerk in their villages, with merchandise amply sufficient for their trade. I was then acting as special sub-agent, having received that appointment from Maj. O'-Fallon, United States' agent for the Missouri river; and, from the peculiar good conduct of those Indians on that occasion, I wrote him a very favorable letter respecting them, and the prospect of their future good behaviour. The friendly disposition manifested on that occasion, however, was not of long duration. I know that one of the principal and leading chiefs of that nation, after visiting me at the Mandans, and ascertaining the time I intended to descend the river, returned home, raised a party, and way-laid the river, for the purpose of attacking my boat. I know that some of the principal braves of that nation attempted, during the last winter, to rob my

clerk, while in their own villages, and committed violence upon him. In the month of March last, after this clerk left their villages, and descended the Missouri, to one of our principal Sioux trading houses, about 200 miles below the Ricaras, a party of that nation, consisting of about 80 men, came down to the neighborhood of this house, met six of our voyagers a few miles from it, who were employed in collecting the furs and peltries traded from the Sioux Indians at different points in the vicinity of the house, stripped them naked in the Prairie, robbed them of their clothes, stole two or three horses or mules, beat each of the men severely, and left them naked in the Prairie. The same party came that night and fired on the house, stole another horse, and went off.

A day or two subsequent to those outrages, another party, amounting to about 115 men, came, in daylight, and attacked this house. Mr. McDonald, one of my partners, his clerks, and eight or ten voyagers, defended themselves and the house, which contained a large amount of property. In this affair, the Ricaras lost two men killed, and probably three or four wounded.

Question 8.—Are the Ricara Indians a stationary or wandering tribe?

Answer.—It will be seen, from my answer to preceding questions, that they are stationary.

Question 9.—Do you know, or have you heard, that any American citizens have hunted or trapped on the grounds belonging to the Ricaras? Do you know of a letter written by an Indian agent at St. Louis, and printed in the Atlantic papers, attributing their hostility to this cause?

Answer.—No party of American citizens, authorized to pass through the Indian country, have ever been in the habit of trapping on the Ricara grounds, to my knowledge. The country affords but very little fur—nor do I know of any hunting in the Ricara country, other than what is necessary for the subsistence of persons passing through.

The letter referred to by the committee, purporting to have been written by an Indian agent at St. Louis, attributing the attack upon Gen. Ashley to this cause, accidentally fell into my hands a day or two before I left St. Louis, in December last. It was published in some one of the Atlantic papers. I have no knowledge of the author of said letter. I am personally acquainted with the different Indian agents and officers of the Indian Department on that station, and feel satisfied that it is not the production of either of them. Major O'Fallon, with whom I conversed about it, was indignant at its contents, and concurred with me in the opinion that it was a fabrication. Major Graham, whom I have seen at this place, is ignorant of the writer of this letter, and he and Major O'Fallon are the only agents on the Missouri river.

Question 10.—Do you know of any cause which led to the attack upon Gen. Ashley's party?

Answer.—I do not positively know the cause of attack upon Gen. Ashley. I think the remote causes may very readily be traced to

their uniform hostility to Americans, and disposition to commit all sorts of depredations; but, from my views and *knowledge* of the Indian character, I think it highly probable that the immediate cause originated in a spirit of revenge for the loss sustained in the attack upon our house. Indians are not governed by the principles of right and wrong in such cases, or in the habit of inquiring where the fault lies. When the blood of an Indian is spilt, his relations are apt to revenge it the first opportunity. But, as so many contradictory statements have been made in relation to the commencement of this war, I hope the honorable committee will not think it amiss in me to remark, that an investigation upon that particular point would be met with some satisfaction.

Question 11.—Have you any reason to believe that the Hudson's Bay Company excited the Indians to that attack?

Answer.—I have no reason to believe that the Hudson's Bay Company excited the Ricaras to that attack. On the contrary, I am convinced they did not. The influence of that company does not extend as low as the Ricaras; nor do I believe they have any intercourse with them at present. The Ricaras make nothing to induce a wish on the part of that company to acquire influence amongst them.

Question 12.—Do you know, or have you heard of any hostilities between the Assinniboin Indians, and citizens of the United States?

Answer. The only late hostilities, of which I have any knowledge, on the part of the Assinniboins, towards American citizens, are the following: They committed a robbery upon Major Henry, in the month of August, 1822, a little above the Mandan villages. He was ascending the Missouri, at the head of an expedition, fitted out by Messrs. Ashley and Henry, for the purpose of *trapping Beaver*; Major Henry was on board of his boat, and had a party of men going by land with some forty or fifty horses; they met a large party of those Indians, who, by their address, got possession of the horses and rode them off. Another party of those Indians came to our Fort, at the Mandans' villages, in the month of January last, and, I think, I understood from Mr. Vanderburgh, fired on the Fort; after which, they stole one or two mules and retired. This was done in the night.

Question 13. Are the Assinniboins stationary, or wandering?

Answer. The Assinniboins are a wandering tribe, and, I believe, are a band of the Sioux Indians; they speak the same language, and from the vast region through which they range, must be very numerous. The principal hunting grounds, and country, most frequented by such of those Indians, as I have any correct knowledge of, lies on the Assinniboin river, and left of the Missouri, above the Mandans, on the different streams coming in from the North, as high as Milk river; and, I believe, they range as far as Maria's river. They are frequently found on the Missouri, between the Mandans' and Yellow Stone river; and, I believe, their *principal* trade is carried on at those British establishments on the Assinniboin river, about 170 miles from the Mandans. American citizens have had no friendly intercourse with them, in that section of the country, to my knowledge.

Question 14. Where is the richest Fur region, beyond the Mississippi?

Answer. The richest Fur region, of which I have any knowledge, is that through which the Black Foot Indians range.

Question 15. Can the Fur trade of this region be secured to citizens of the United States, without the aid of a military post, at, or beyond, the Mandan villages?

Answer. The Fur trade of that country, and the country lying north of the Missouri river below, as far as the Mandans, cannot be secured to American citizens, until the causes which now, and have ever prevented them from participating in it, are removed; unless they are protected in extending their business into those remote regions, until such time as they acquire an influence sufficient to counteract that of British trading companies. The committee will observe, that those companies have no intercourse or influence with any of the tribes heretofore mentioned, with the exception of those which range through the country in question. If all trade, and intercourse, between those tribes and British traders, can be cut off, and the American trade introduced, it would very soon protect itself. Most Indians, who have long been accustomed to intercourse with whites, become dependent on them for the supply of particular articles, without which they cannot well live, once having acquired a knowledge of their use. It is not my opinion that the Mandans is sufficiently near the Rocky mountains to make it a point for protecting the trade on the upper waters of the Missouri river; the falls of Missouri, or Maria's river, or the Yellow Stone, would each be preferable to it; particularly either of the former points, and in the order in which they are named. A large post is not now necessary at the Council Bluffs, a small garrison there, one at, or near, the *Big Bend*, one at the Mandans, and the principal one at, or beyond, the Yellow Stone, are, in my opinion, so indispensably necessary for the preservation of the Fur trade, on the upper Missouri, that without it the most valuable part of that trade may be considered as lost to American citizens, and surrendered to the British.

Question 16.—Can corn, for the supply of a post, be raised or purchased from the Indians, at or beyond the Mandan villages?

Answer.—The Mandans and Minnetarees raise considerable quantities of corn, and frequently supply traders and wandering tribes of Indians who visit them. In the fall season, a good deal may be purchased from them, but still I think it would be a precarious dependence for the supply of a post. The article, however, can as well be raised by whites, as Indians, from the same soil, and, with sufficient inducements, the Indians would doubtless raise much more than they now do.

Question 17.—Is there a trade carried on between Missouri and New Mexico, and what articles are carried out and brought back in return?

Answer.—I know there is a trade carried on between the citizens of Missouri and New Mexico, but I am not sufficiently informed up-

on the subject to enable me fully to answer the question. I believe, however, the only articles brought back in return for those taken out, are mules, specie, and furs.

Question 18.—Is it subject to be interrupted by Indians on the Arkansas?

Answer.—I have understood that some of those trading parties have been interfered with by Indians on the Arkansas, and several robberies committed, and some murders.

Question 19.—Would a military post, some distance higher up the Arkansas than Fort Smith, contribute to protect the citizens engaged in that trade?

Answer.—I am not sufficiently acquainted with that country to justify me in giving information respecting the effect of a military post above Fort Smith, on the Arkansas, but think it obviously true, that such a post would be a great protection to the trade between Missouri and Mexico.

Question 20.—What is the temper of the tribes who have no intercourse with British traders, towards the citizens of the United States?

Answer.—The disposition of such of the Indian tribes on the Missouri, as are personally known to me, which have no intercourse with British traders, (excepting the Ricaras) has generally been friendly, since I acquired a knowledge of them. But where there are so many different tribes and bands of Indians, it is almost impossible to keep them all at peace with each other. Parties of war are continually roving through all sections of the country, and while on these excursions, have frequently committed some slight depredations, which come within my knowledge; but such things do not originate in a general spirit of hostility on the part of their nation. Amongst those who are ignorant of the character of whites having but little intercourse with them, such depredations are more frequent, because there is a greater spirit of hostility existing amongst those remote tribes towards each other, than those who have long had intercourse with whites, and such parties are more numerous.

Question 21.—What is the temper of the tribes towards American citizens, which have an intercourse with British traders?

Answer.—It will be seen, from my answer to preceding questions, that the disposition of such tribes of Indians as have intercourse with British traders, particularly the black feet, has been uniformly hostile towards American citizens, in so much that they have had no intercourse with any of those tribes, with the exception of the Mandans and Minnetarees. It has not been long since British traders had intercourse with these tribes, but they have been so reduced by war and pestilence, the quantity of furs obtained from them, at present, is so small, and the American trade having been introduced amongst them, that there has been no intercourse, to my knowledge, for the last two or three years.

Question 22. How near do the British trading establishments approach the territory of the United States?

Answer. The establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company now

stretch entirely across the continent, bordering upon the American territory, and at some places perhaps within it. If the country beyond the Rocky Mountains, in the latitude of the Columbia, belongs to the United States, they have four establishments on American territory; one at the mouth of that river, one near its junction with Lewis's River, one near the mountains convenient to the *Flathead* Indians, and one other higher up. *Fort de Prairie* is a very celebrated establishment, and I think it is situated high up on the Assinnaboin river. This river is lined with establishments; one very large at the mouth of *Moose river*, one hundred and seventy miles from the Mandan villages; another on the *river Capel*, a southern branch of the Assinniboin, both of which must be either within the American boundary, or near to it. The *Saskatchiwin* river, which runs parallel to the Missouri, and but a short distance from it, rising in the same chain of mountains, and flowing into lake Winipeg, is also lined with British establishments; and from Indian information I have reason to believe, that they have an establishment on Maria's river, a branch of the Missouri. It is from these establishments, on the Assinnaboin and *Saskatchiwin* rivers, that the Blackfeet and Assinniboins, both numerous and powerful nations, get their supplies of merchandise, arms, and ammunition, and come across to attack the American traders on the upper waters of the Missouri, and the furs robbed from American citizens are doubtless carried to these establishments to trade.

Question 23. Is it to the benefit or injury of fur traders, to have hostilities with the Indians?

Answer. So far from being to the benefit of persons engaged in the fur trade, to have hostilities with the Indians, the very existence of such a trade depends on their pacific disposition; and both the interest and safety of persons engaged in that business, require, that they should not only preserve a friendly understanding with the Indians themselves, but, so far as possible, to keep the different Indian tribes at peace with each other, in order that their property and men may not be exposed to roving war parties, who, particularly amongst those remote wandering tribes, are always disposed to mischief, when on such excursions.

Question 24. Has the abolition of the factory system been the cause of any Indian hostilities beyond the Mississippi?

Answer. I know of no hostilities on the part of the Indians, originating in the abolition of the factory system. I know but little of the operation or influence of these establishments, having been removed far beyond them. It is hardly probable, that the abolition of this system excited the Riccaras and Black Foot Indians to hostilities, neither of those tribes ever having heard of a factory or a factor, removed as they were, from twelve hundred to three thousand miles from the range of their operations.

Question 25. What is your opinion of the good or bad effects of hunting or trapping on Indian lands by American citizens?

Answer. The tribes in the neighbourhood of the Council Bluffs have complained of it, and are greatly opposed to it. The Crow In-

dians have never objected to it, although they have seen it with their own eyes, by parties in the employment of the Missouri Fur Company, for two years. These parties have carried it on during all that time, without the least interruption of friendly intercourse, probably because they also traded with the Indians for all they could take. But I consider the case of the Crows an exception, and that the practice must lead to bad consequences. But no Indians that ever I heard of, ever objected to traders, travellers, or others, killing what was necessary for their subsistence. That comes under the notion of hospitality. The trapping done by the men of our company, was in conformity with the practice, and not under any license; the one which we receive from the Government is to *trade*.

Question 26. Have any other companies besides General Ashley's and the Missouri Fur Company, hunted or trapped in the Indian country?

Answer. Messrs. Berthold, Chouteau, and Pratte, of St. Louis, who have been largely engaged in the *Indian trade*, and the principal competitors of the Missouri Fur Company, in that business, have also been, and are still largely engaged in the trapping business.

The numerous inquiries of the committee being answered, I must beg to be indulged in a few observations relative to the system of trade and intercourse with Indians, which are most respectfully submitted to the consideration of the committee.

It is now, and has long been my opinion, that the present system of trade and intercourse with Indians, so far as it applies to the Missouri river, is defective in several particulars. I believe that certain points should be fixed for trading establishments, and that every person engaged in that business should be strictly prohibited from carrying on any trade out of those trading houses, either in a direct or indirect manner, or accompanying Indians on their hunting excursions, for any purpose whatsoever; and that no white man, or half-breed who has been raised amongst whites, and is considered a citizen, and who is not authorized by licence, or otherwise, or in the employ of some licensed person, should be permitted to live in the Indian country, or amongst the Indians, under any manner of excuse or pretence whatsoever; that the points for the trading establishments should be selected by the Indian agent or agents, or the person exercising their duties, and that it should be the duty of said agents frequently to visit each and every of such establishments, in their agency, provided they can be furnished with a competent escort to make themselves respected as the representatives of their government, particularly when visiting such tribes within their agency as are far removed from civilization.

It would not be proper in me to trouble the committee with any reasoning upon this subject. Suffice it to say, that these were my original views upon the subject, and that every day's experience has impressed me more fully with their correctness, and convinced me that such a system, while it contributed much to the benefit of the Indians in a pecuniary way, would have a tendency to impress them

with something like a regular system of business; teach them the true character of the whites, and impress them with a degree of respect for American citizens, which the present mode of roving about is not calculated to do; and, at the same time, would contribute greatly to the safety and convenience of those engaged in the business, without depriving either of any single benefit derived from the present system.

I would further beg to be indulged in making a few statements, to impress the committee with an idea of the value of the Indian trade to the United States. The returns of licences show, that upwards of \$600,000 was embarked, last year, in the trade; and, if extended into the Rocky Mountains, I should suppose that it would employ a capital of three times the amount now employed in *that* trade, for an indefinite term of years to come. Almost the whole of the articles necessary for this trade can be made in the United States. They consist of hardware, comprehending light guns, knives, hatchets, axes, hoes, lances, battle-axes, and beaver traps; cottons, comprehending checks, stripes, coarse calicoes, handkerchiefs, &c.; woollens, comprehending coarse cloths, blankets, flannels; to which may be added, tobacco, powder, lead, and many other articles of smaller value. The company of which I am a member, has always kept several blacksmiths' shops in operation on the Missouri, for the manufacture of some of the above-mentioned articles; and at the time of the commencement of the late hostilities, had one at the Mandans, one at the Big Bend of the Missouri, and two forges in the neighbourhood of the Council Bluffs. The woollen and cotton goods particularly, can be made by American manufacturers, of a quality equally as well suited to the Indian trade as British goods, with which the Indians are at present supplied.

With much respect,

I am your obedient servant,

JOSHUA PILCHER.







